operations of foodgrains; strengthening of Public Distribution System; monitoring of prices and availability situation; strict enforcement of the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act and other regulatory measures; augmenting domestic supplies through imports wherever necessary, to check any abnormal rise in prices.

Apart from the measures on the broad macro-economic front, specific measures have also been taken by the Government in respect of particular essential commodities under pressure, such as, edible oils, pulses, tea, sugar and cement etc.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Review of increase in the prices of commodities

540. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made any review of the prices of different commodities in the market;

(b) if so, the details of the latest trend;

(c) whether the prices of edible oils including vanaspati are increasing substantially;

(d) if so, the reasons of the rise in the prices of these commodities;

(e) the steps taken to arrest the price rise; and

(f) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL): (a) Government are constantly reviewing the behaviour of prices of various essential commodities on the basis of Wholesale Price Indices and other available data.

(b) During the last six months ending 21-7-1990 (between weeks ending 20-1-90 and 21-7-90), the Wholesale Price Index of rice was higher by 8.2% as compared to an increase of 9.0% and 10.2% in the corresponding periods in 1989 and 1988 respectively; the index of sugar, tea, *jowar*, chillies, black pepper, *atta, maida* have declined, while kerosene and coke remained steady during this period. There has, however, been a significant rise in the case of oilseeds and edible oils.

(c) and (d): Yes, Sir. The main reasons for rise in prices of edible oils and vanaspati are due to the decline in production of oilseeds during 1989-90, pressure of consumer demand, demand and supply gap in edible oils, and constraint of foreign exchange to make larger imports.

(e) and (f): Government has accorded highest priority to check the rising trend in prices of essential commodities. Both long term and short term measures are being taken for the purpose. The measures taken broadly include steps to increase the production of essential commodities; effective procurement and buffer stocking operations of foodgrains, strengthening of Public Distribution System, monitoring of price and availability situation, strict enforcement of the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act and other regulatory measures; and augmenting domestic supplies through imports (e.g. edible oils) subject to over all constraint of foreign exchange resources.

Increase in the price of edible oils and vanaspati ghee

541. SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN:
SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) what had been the price of edible oils and vanaspati ghee during the last three years, yearwise;

(b) what had been the corresponding increase of each when compared to

previous years, yearwise;

(c) what steps are being taken to contain the abnormal price rise of edible oils and vanaspati in the market; and

(d) whether Government propose to take measures to contain the rise of price of these items during the coming marriage season July-October when demand will reach at its peak?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI RAM PUJAN PATEL): (a) and (b):The wholesale price index for edible oils and vanaspati during last three years, year-wise alongwith corresponding increase of each compared to previous years are at Annexure [*See* Appendix CLV, Annexure No. 17]

(c) and (d); The steps taken by the Government include monitoring of prices in respect of edible oils and vanaspati, strict enforcement of provisions of Essential Commodities Act, 1955, increased supplies of imported oils through PDS, intensification of de-boarding operations and lowering of stock limits of edible oils and vanaspati.

Sending of young children to Gulf countries for camel race

542. SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN:
SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the racket of sending young children to Gulf countries for camel race;

(b) if so, the number of such cases which came to Government's knowledge so far;

(c) the number of persons arrested so far for indulging in such a racket,

(d) whether our embassies in the Gulf countries are playing any positive role in preventing such racket; if so, the details of their contribution so far in this regard; and

(e) what steps are being taken by Government to prevent such inhuman practices?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND WELFARE (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Eight cases have come to Government's knowledge so far.

(c) The information is being collected.

(d) Indian Embassises in the Gulf countries promptly intervene on receipt of information regarding deployment of children for camel race. Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi helped in repatriation of six children-Two in August, 1989, one in September, 1989 and three in December, 1989.

(e) The agencies concerned with emigration have been alerted to exercise due circumspection in the scrutiny of cases where minor children are sought to be accompanied on a passport before granting the requisite clearance.

Complaints against recruitment agents for non-payment

543. SHRI PASUMPON THA. KIRUTTINAN:
SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to steate:

(a) the number of complaints received by Government against recruitment agents regarding non-payment of wages, non-refund of security deposit, etc. during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the number of complaints probed by the Protector General of Immigrants during the above period, year-wise;

(c) the number of cases where many has been recovered by Government from recruitment agents, year-wise;

(d) the number of recruitment agents whose security deposits have been confiscated by Government for non-compliance with rules during the last